

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMCONSUL KARACHI
TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
SECSTATE WASHDC 7174
AMCONSUL LAHORE

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: KARACHI/ SIND REACTION TO ASGHAR KHAN' S STATEMENTS

REF: LAHORE 0452, 0464

BEGIN SUMMARY: KARACHI AND SIND PPP ORGANIZATIONS, MANY NEWSPAPERS JOINED IN CONDEMNATION OF ASGHAR KHAN' S REMARKS AGAINST PRESIDENT. KARACHI PPP TOOK OUT ANTI-ASGHAR PROCESSION. PROVINCIAL MINISTER WARNED ASGHAR HE MIGHT NO LONGER BE SAFE IN SIND. END SUMMARY.

1. PROCESSION ORGANIZED BY CITY PPP AND ESTIMATED TO NUMBER ABOUT 2000 WOUND THROUGH DOWNTOWN KARACHI AFTERNOON MAY 2, LED BY BLACK- FACED MAN LAMPOONING AIR MARSHAL RIDING DONKEY AND WEARING GARLAND OF SHOES. PPP WORKERS ALSO CARRIED POTATOES ON ENDS OF STICKS, CALLING ASGHAR KHAN " ALOO (POTATO) KHAN". PARADE ENDED AT REGAL CINEMA BUS STOP, WHERE GATHERING ADDRESSED BY PROVINCIAL MINISTERS JAM SADIQ ALI, ABDUS SATTAR GABOL, FEMALE MPA TAJ BIBI, OTHER PPP LUMINARIES. JAM SADIQ ECHOED PUNJAB GOVERNOR KHAR' S APRIL 30 WARNING TO AIR MARSHAL, SAYING THAT PEOPLE WERE SO AROUSED BY ASGHAR' S REMARKS
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THAT HIS SAFETY IN SIND COULD NOT BE GUARANTEED.

2. SIND CHIEF MINISTER MUMTAZ BHUTTO ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO CHORUS OF CONDEMNATIONS OF AIR MARSHAL. IN PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED MAY 1, JUST PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR RAWALPINDI, MUMTAZ SAID ASGHAR' S " LANGUAGE OF BULLETS" HAD REMOVED ALL DOUBTS ABOUT THE QUALITY OF HIS MIND AND GENUINENESS OF HIS PATRIOTISM. CHIEF MINISTER CALLED IT SIGNIFICANT THAT AIR MARSHAL HAD MADE HIS " FOUL REMARKS" AT A TIME WHEN PPP' S " FEW REJECTED BAD EGGS" WERE TRYING TO " COLLECT HIM IN THEIR BASKET".

3. PROVINCIAL FINANCE MINISTER KAMAL AZFAR IN PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED APRIL 30 SAID THAT ASGHAR KHAN' S " POLITICAL FRUSTRATIONS HAD PUSHED HIM TO THE VERGE OF THE LUNATIC FRINGE" AND THAT HIS ATTEMPTS TO FAN HATRED COULD NOT BE TOLERATED. PPP ORGANIZATIONS AND SPOKESMEN THROUGHOUT SIND ALSO CONDEMNED AIR MARSHAL' S REMARKS, AS DID HYDERABAD POLITICO KAZI MOHAMMED AKBAR.

4. EDITORIAL REACTION TO CONTROVERSY MIXED. KARACHI EVENING DAILY NEWS IN APRIL 30 EDITORIAL TITLED " DON' T ARREST HIM, PLEASE" SAID ASGHAR' S DIATRIBE AGAINST PRESIDENT SUGGESTED A " CASE OF SENILE DECAY". MORNING NEWS MUSED THAT SINCE THE TEHRIK- I- ISTIQLAL LEADER HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO WIN POPULARITY NORMALLY, HE NOW SOUGHT IT BE COURTING ARREST. SUN CALLED AIR MARSHAL AN AMBITIOUS MAN WITH " PATHOLOGICAL" PROBLEMS. OF ENGLISH- LANGUAGE KARACHI PAPERS, ONLY DAWN NOT ENTIRELY CONDEMNATORY, AVERRING ON APRIL 30 THAT ASGHAR' S INTEGRITY, COURAGE OF CONVICTIONS COULD NOT BE DOUBTED, BUT MAINTAINING HE OVERREACTED TO REGIME' S PRESSURES AND MISJUDGED CURRENT POLITICAL REALITIES. ON MAY 4 PAPER RAPPED " SOME SECTIONS" OF RULING PARTY FOR THEIR " INTEMPERATE REACTION" TO AIR MARSHAL' S " ILL- ADVISED UTTERANCES", AND CALLED UPON ALL ORGANIZED POLITICAL FORCES IN COUNTRY TO REMEMBER THAT DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS NEED CALM ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH TO DEVELOP.

5. VERNACULAR- LANGUAGE PRESS REACTIONS DIVIDED. URDU JANG AND MASHRIQ, SINDHI IBRAT AND HILAL- I- PAKISTAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ADVISED GOVERNMENT TO ARRANGE MENTAL TREATMENT FOR HIM. URDU HURRIYAT, ON OTHER HAND, CALLED ASGHAR' S REMARKS A WARNING TO THE GOVERNMENT AND CONDEMNED PROCESSIONS, REMARKS OF GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AGAINST HIM. URDU JASARAT CITED INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE COMMITTED BY REGIME AND DEFENDED AIR MARSHAL. GUJARATI MILLAT, WHILE OPPOSING THREATS IN GENERAL, OPINED THAT ASGHAR' S THREATS WERE

POLITICAL WHILE GOVERNOR KHAR' S WERE PERSONAL AND MORE
SERIOUS, SINCE GOVERNMENT POSSESSED RESOURCES,
POWER, AND EXPERIENCE NEEDED TO CARRY THEM OUT. PAPER
WARNED GOVERNOR KHAR THAT HE WOULD BE UNDER SUSPICION
SHOULD ANYTHING UNTOWARD HAPPEN TO ASGHAR KHAN.

DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT.
TIGER

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